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1962/10/29

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY
G/A

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MEMORANDUM

October 29, 1962

SUBJECT: Considerations in Defining Weapons
Which Must be Removed from Cuba

The United States objective has been the removal of offensive weapons from Cuba. There is, of course, no generally accepted definition of "offensive weapons." We would like to see maximum military withdrawal from Cuba, but we must balance against this a reasonable interpretation of what is intolerable to us. On September 4, the President clearly indicated that weapons then in Cuba--including fighter aircraft, coastal defense cruise-type missiles, missile armed patrol boats, and surface-to-air missiles--were not at that time regarded as "offensive weapons." On the other hand, the list of weapons entry of which was prohibited under the quarantine proclamation included all surface-to-surface missiles, bomber and fighter-bomber aircraft, bombs, and other support equipment for the above systems.

It is clear that the weapons systems which must be removed are the 1,000 n.m. and 2,200 n.m. surface-to-surface missiles, IL-28 jet light bombers, and the warheads and support equipment for these systems.

We cannot reasonably insist that the MIG fighters, surface-to-air missiles, or non-missile ground force weapons should be removed. Similarly, it would not be reasonable to demand that the planned fishing port not be built. The items on which there may be a legitimate difference of opinion are: short range (about 35 n.m.) coastal defense missiles, short range (about 15 n.m.) artillery rockets, and the short range (about 25 n.m.) missiles carried on patrol craft. Of these, the missile carrying patrol boats are most susceptible of offensive employment. None of these three systems, incidentally, has a nuclear delivery capability.

We would recommend that the United States initially propose that "surface-to-surface missiles" be removed, and that on the actual implementation a low-key effort be made to secure the return to the USSR of the patrol craft and coastal defense missiles, but that if challenged we should fall back to exclude the three short range systems. In addition to the LRMs and LRMs, the IL28s should definitely be included, but the MIG fighters should not be.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDO/MS

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APPROVED BY: FA DATE: 12/17/62
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[Handwritten mark] The question of excluding visits of Soviet submarines or bombers should best be handled by appropriate unilateral US declaration at some appropriate time that any new attempt to create Soviet offensive bases in Cuba, including submarines as well as missiles and bombers, would be an even more serious infringement of the security of the Western Hemisphere than had been the recent Soviet attempt to build such bases, and would of course require us to take the necessary measures to secure their removal.

Khrushchev's message of October 23 flatly stated that, in view of US assurances against an invasion, "the motives which induced us to render assistance of such a kind to Cuba disappeared." In view of the fact that Khrushchev was referring to what he termed means of defense--and which would seem to cover all Soviet military assistance to Cuba--there is some foundation for a US demand that all Soviet military advisers return to the Soviet Union. While this would not be a sine qua non of our position, it would seem to be a useful line to pursue. The departure of Soviet military specialists would, in the judgment of the Intelligence Community, initially render inoperable the surface-to-air missile sites, coastal defense missile sites, and most of the MIG-21 force. The JCS proposed procedure for rendering offensive systems to Cuba inoperable, and creating suitable guidelines for the UN inspection, seem satisfactory.

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[Handwritten note:] See to R & by 10/25, and 11/1/62